

WHAT IS A BUFFALO?

- ❶ A buffalo, which scientists call bison, is the largest land mammal in North America.
- ❷ A male buffalo, known as a bull, may weigh over a ton.
- ❸ When you compare buffalo to marine mammals, the only mammal larger is the whale.

TYPES OF BUFFALO

- ❶ There are two types of buffalo are found in North America.

Plains Buffalo

- ❶ Today's Plains buffalo weighs about approximately 2000 pounds and has a horn span of about 3 feet.
- ❷ Both male and female buffalo have horns they never shed.
- ❸ A buffalo stands about 5 ½ -6 ½ feet high at its shoulder and is about 9 ½ -11 ½ feet long. They have a 1 ½ foot tail.

Wood Buffalo

- ❶ Wood buffalo are larger than Plains buffalo. Some bulls weigh more than 2,500 pounds.
- ❷ Their fur is darker and woollier. They also have a broader skull.
- ❸ They are mostly found in Canada.

MORE BUFFALO FACTS

- ❶ A buffalo can live to be 30 years old, but most live for about 15-20 years.
- ❷ Buffalo are fast! They can run up to 35 miles per hour.
- ❸ Their huge hump is made of muscle, which helps them move their head through the snow to find grass.
- ❹ When buffalo have to scratch an itch, they make what is called a buffalo wallow. They lie on their sides and move around lifting the soil up and around them. This also covers them with dust to prevent bug bites and helps them rub off their winter coat.
- ❺ Family groups, called herds, can number 30 to 60 animals. The herd is made up of the lead cow, her daughters and their calves, and young bulls. Mature bulls only join the herd during breeding season.

BUFFALO IN THE PAST

- ❶ Pre-historic buffalo were huge animals! They weighed about 5000 pounds and had a horn span of about 6 feet. They were about 2 times larger than today's buffalo. Hard to imagine!
- ❷ Buffalo herds numbered 30,000,000 to 70,000,000 before contact with settlers. If you compare those numbers of buffalo to people, it would equal the amount that live in the state of California today.
- ❸ Besides the Great Plains region, the remains of ancestral or pre-historic buffalo have also been found in southern Mexico, Northern Canada, Florida, and Virginia. That means, at one time, buffalo roamed all across North America's vast grassland from coast to coast!

BUFFALO POPULATION INCREASES

- ❶ By the efforts of the Tribal governments, colleges, and organizations, buffalo are returning to Indian country.
- ❷ Today's buffalo population in the U.S. is over 250,000 and continues to grow.



Sources:

Arthun, Dave, and Jerry L. Holechek. "The North American Bison." June 1982. Bisoncentre.com.
http://www.bisoncentre.com/resources/bce170/bce170_american_bison.html 02/05/2001.

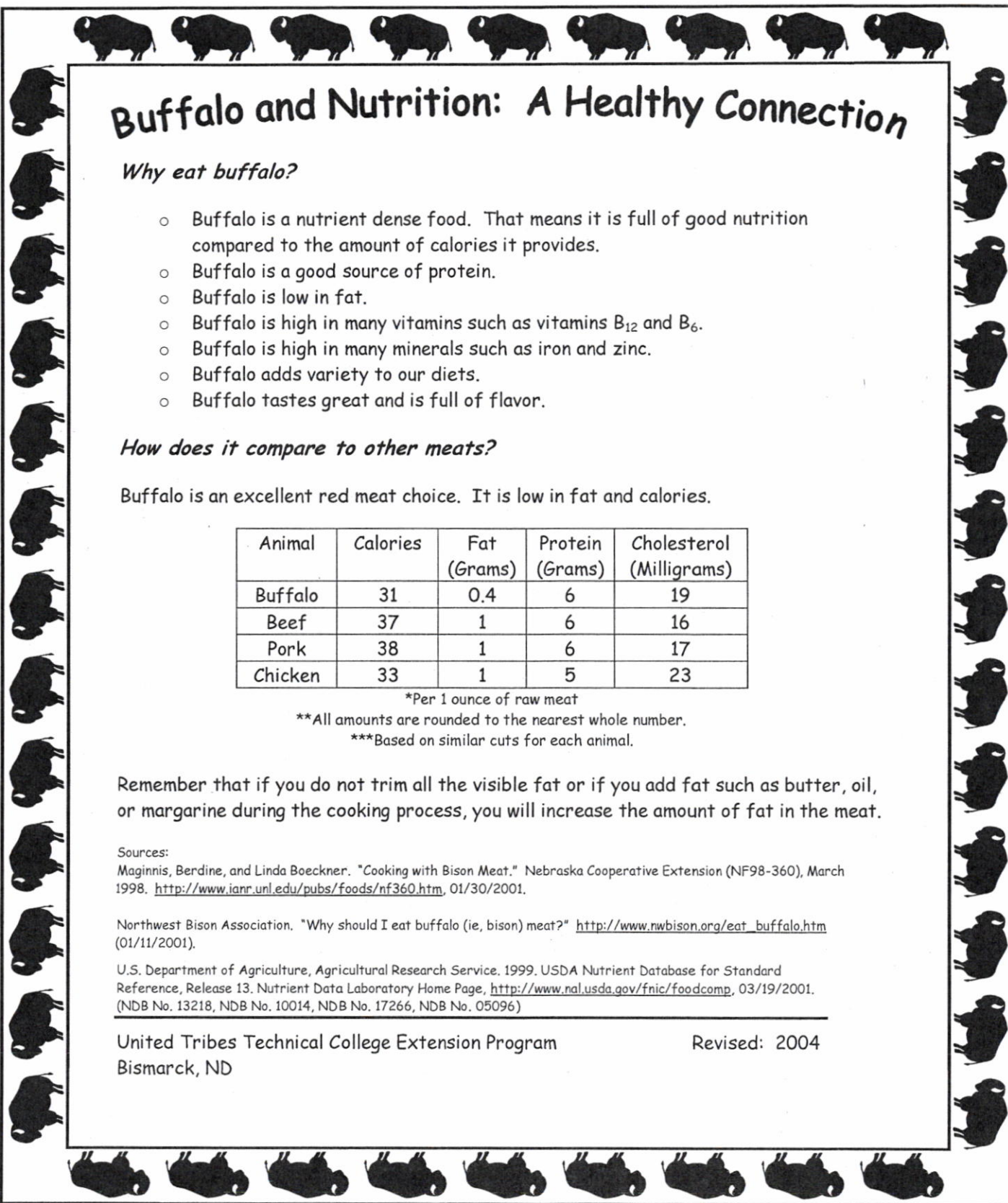
Intertribal Bison Cooperative. "Gifts of the Buffalo Nation." Rapid City: Spizzirri Press, 1996.

Intertribal Bison Cooperative. "The Traditional Uses of the Buffalo." No date available.

North American Bison Cooperative. "History of the North American Bison." 2000.
http://www.nabisoncoop.com/subpages/history/bison_then.htm 01/12/2001.

Traditional Uses of the Buffalo



A decorative border of black buffalo silhouettes surrounds the entire page. The silhouettes are arranged in a rectangular frame, with some facing left and some facing right.

Buffalo and Nutrition: A Healthy Connection

Why eat buffalo?

- Buffalo is a nutrient dense food. That means it is full of good nutrition compared to the amount of calories it provides.
- Buffalo is a good source of protein.
- Buffalo is low in fat.
- Buffalo is high in many vitamins such as vitamins B₁₂ and B₆.
- Buffalo is high in many minerals such as iron and zinc.
- Buffalo adds variety to our diets.
- Buffalo tastes great and is full of flavor.

How does it compare to other meats?

Buffalo is an excellent red meat choice. It is low in fat and calories.

Animal	Calories	Fat (Grams)	Protein (Grams)	Cholesterol (Milligrams)
Buffalo	31	0.4	6	19
Beef	37	1	6	16
Pork	38	1	6	17
Chicken	33	1	5	23

*Per 1 ounce of raw meat

**All amounts are rounded to the nearest whole number.

***Based on similar cuts for each animal.

Remember that if you do not trim all the visible fat or if you add fat such as butter, oil, or margarine during the cooking process, you will increase the amount of fat in the meat.

Sources:

Maginnis, Berdine, and Linda Boeckner. "Cooking with Bison Meat." Nebraska Cooperative Extension (NF98-360), March 1998. <http://www.ianr.unl.edu/pubs/foods/nf360.htm>, 01/30/2001.

Northwest Bison Association. "Why should I eat buffalo (ie, bison) meat?" http://www.nwbison.org/eat_buffalo.htm (01/11/2001).

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service. 1999. USDA Nutrient Database for Standard Reference, Release 13. Nutrient Data Laboratory Home Page, <http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/foodcomp>, 03/19/2001. (NDB No. 13218, NDB No. 10014, NDB No. 17266, NDB No. 05096)

United Tribes Technical College Extension Program
Bismarck, ND

Revised: 2004

Buffalo are sacred!

"The Buffalo was part of us, his flesh and blood being absorbed by us until it became our own flesh and blood. Our clothing, our tipis, everything we needed for life came from the buffalo's body. It was hard to say where the animals ended and the human began."

-John (Fire) Lame Deer, Oglala-Lame Deer Seeker of Visions, With Richard Erdoes, 1972

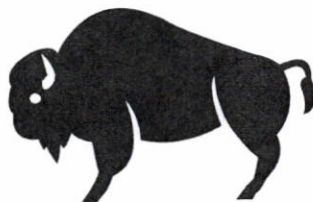
- ❖ Over one million Native Americans shared the land of North America with the buffalo. The buffalo were very important to Native Americans and to their survival.
- ❖ Native Americans used every part of the buffalo. They did not waste anything. They used the buffalo as a source of food, clothing, and shelter.
- ❖ Native Americans honored the buffalo and lived in harmony with them. They treated the buffalo with respect, and the buffalo was very sacred to them.

"The Indian was frugal in the midst of plenty. When the buffalo roamed the plains in multitudes, he slaughtered only what he could eat and these he used to the hair and bones."

- Luther Standing Bear, Lakota

"The buffalo represents the people and the universe and should always be treated with respect. For was he not here before the two-legged peoples, and is he not generous in that he gives us our homes and our food? The buffalo is wise in many things, and thus we should always be as a relative with him."

-Oglala Sioux holy man Black Elk, The Sacred Pipe, 1953



Source: Intertribal Bison Cooperative. *Bison: a Living Story*. San Dimas: Rhythm Net Design Group, 2000.

Diabetes and Native Americans

Did you know?

- * **On average, Native Americans are 2 times as likely to have diabetes than whites.** (Source: Centers for Disease Control)
- * **It is the 4th leading cause of death among Native Americans.** (Source: Indian Health Service)
- * **People with Type 2 diabetes have an increased risk of getting heart disease, which is the leading cause of death for Native Americans.**
- * **Elevated blood sugar levels for a long period of time increase complication risks such as blindness, amputations, and kidney failure.**
- * **There is no cure for diabetes, but it can be prevented!**

Steps for Type 2 Diabetes Prevention

- * **Breastfeed your baby for at least four to six months.**
- * **Exercise three to five days a week for at least 30 minutes.**
- * **Eat five servings of fruits and vegetables a day.**
- * **Choose lean meats, in healthful portions, each day.**
- * **Limit high sugar foods, like pop, candy, and cookies, daily.**
- * **Choose low fat foods, like skim milk, vegetables, and whole wheat breads, daily.**
- * **Drink at least seven to ten 8-ounce glasses of water each day.**

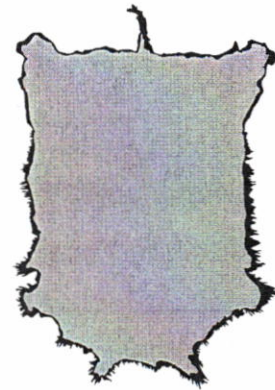
Diabetes Websites

- * **American Diabetes Association:** <http://www.diabetes.org>
- * **Indian Health Service National Diabetes Program:** <http://www.ihs.gov/MedicalPrograms/diabetes>
- * **Association of American Indian Physicians:** <http://www.aaip.com>
- * **Centers for Disease Control:** <http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes>

Traditional Uses of the Buffalo



Match Game



Match the part of the buffalo with a traditional use.

- | | |
|---------------------------|----------------|
| 1. _____ Tipi Liners | a. Teeth |
| 2. _____ Altar | b. Bladder |
| 3. _____ Parfleche Bags | c. Meat |
| 4. _____ Fly Brush | d. Hair |
| 5. _____ Headresses | e. Rawhide |
| 6. _____ Sausages | f. Tanned Hide |
| 7. _____ Spoons | g. Tail |
| 8. _____ Knives | h. Bones |
| 9. _____ Ornaments | i. Skull |
| 10. _____ Water Container | j. Hoofs |

